

The life of the Diamond Willow Rover Crew

THE DIAMOND WILLOW

ROVER CREW was originally chartered in 1966 as Explorer Post 109, BSA, specializing in International Scouting. Our sponsor was the Fraternal Order of Eagles located in Melrose Park, Illinois. We met in the crew room on the second floor of the Aerie as well as in a basement room of one of our members' homes in Oak Park, Illinois. Because of the large number of members from Oak Park we were often referred to as being from Oak Park. Because this was right next to Chicago, we were often known as the Chicago Crew when away at moots in Kentucky and Canada.

The founding Rover Leader was Skipper Ted Simmons who came to us from the BP Crew in Glasgow, Kentucky. He gathered many if not most of the original crew from the Camp Shin Go Beek camp staff when he was program and camp director. Succeeding RLs included Jack A. Beyer, Jack Foulkes, and Robert "Rip" Appleby. To the best of my memory, the first Senior Rover Mates were Robert Russell and Bill Brandner followed by Mike L'Abbe, Dick Marshall, Dick Webster. There were probably others.....

From the beginning, our Crew had a number of important interests:

INTERNATIONAL SCOUTING.

Because of Ted Simmons's interest in World Scouting and because it made Rovering a logical format to follow, we learned about



DIAMOND WILLOW CREW CREST, the two red bars of the senior rover mate, a Rover's knot with a Rambler Badge. I believe we had to log 300 miles on foot, bike, canoe, or sail boat to earn the Rambler emblem.

Scouting around the world. With the 12th World Jamboree slated for Farragut State Park, Idaho, USA, several members of the crew attended.

Other members were to attend world jamborees in Japan, Norway, Australia, and the Netherlands; national jamborees in the USA, Canada, Spain and other countries as part of U.S. friendship trips (Scotland / UK / Norway) or on personal travel with a BSA letter of introduction.

At our Rendezvous Moots we welcomed not only Rovers from Ontario and Quebec Canada but also the Lithuanian Scouts in Exile from Chicago's Lithuanian community.

We exhibited International Scouting in two Scout O Ramas (Big Scout Shows with hundreds of units) in the Thatcher Woods Area Council (Chicago suburbs) and won a Presidential Award for our second exhibit.

We welcomed Scouts from

Scotland, Canada, Japan, Sweden, Norway, and England as honorary crew members many of whom had served on our council camp staff with us through Skipper Simmons's efforts and facilitated by the BSA's International Camp Staff Program.

Rovers from the crew would later go to other World Jamborees. In Australia at the XVI World, American Rovers were somewhat of an oddity at the Rover Breakfast—but it was fun to rekindle friendships with Rovers of Canada, USA, and Australia we had previously met in Kentucky, Chicago, and Ontario..

OUTDOORS

From the beginning of every Rover's life in the crew, **rambling** was a key component. Rovers and squires planned the squire's initial rambles often through the metropolitan area and discovering little known camping sites and Scout Camps like Camp BP on Irving Park Road.

Many of these little oases are now gone but others remain as forest preserves and camps. These rambles also led to the discovery of great pizza places, small airports and historic firehouses, as well as surprise visits to cousins who had little warning that the ramblers were walking ten or more miles to overnight.

Walking and biking in Chicagoland probably gave these Roving lads a much deeper appreciation for the historic treasures, geography, people and places in the area—more than other young adults ever gained. While preserving the Rover/Squire bond and emphasis, as time went on small groups of crew members often trailed the new squire and his Rover and participated.

Canoeing, caving, horseback riding, biking all became more extensive. The Crew could be found camping during all seasons of the year as crew events for the Rovers and Squires, at Moots in Glasgow, Kentucky, and in Ontario, Canada, and as a service corps for many council and district events.

Members of the Rover Crew served as Camp Staff members for our local council camp Camp Shin Go Beek including key directorships and in nearby neighboring camps.

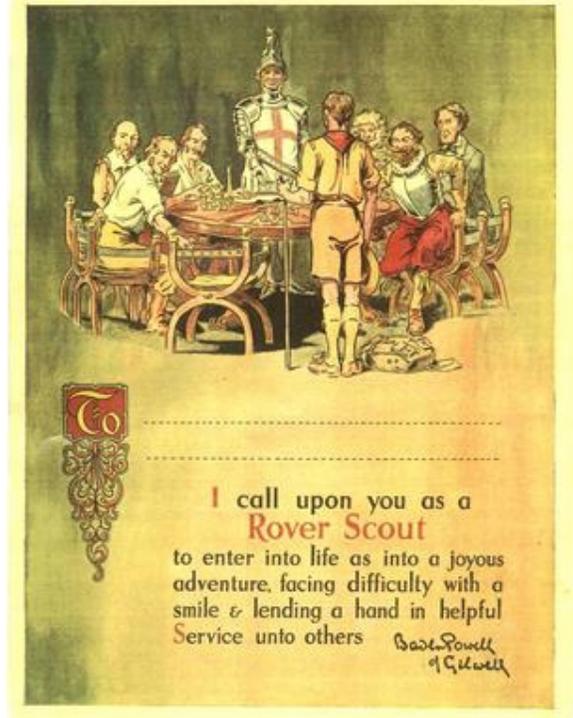
The crew developed and led two Cub Webelos outdoor days to prepare Cubs for Scouts; three Rendezvous Moots in 1969, 1971, and 1972; and a number of junior leader training weekend courses for Boy Scouts who had earned the first class rank.

SERVICE QUESTS

The idea that we were giving back to Scouting and our community was coupled with a desire to help each individual gain new skills.

SELF: The crew definitely encouraged each member to pursue the Eagle Scout award. Some members joined with this award and many others completed requirements. Two major gatherings of the crew, friends and family were Eagle Courts of Honor and our annual Charter presentation.

Other quests undertaken were Rambling, Outdoors, American Red Cross First Aid Instructor ratings, Scout Leader Training, Wood Badge, Automobile Repair (a must given our vehicles and the subject of many other stories), Ham



Radio, National Camping School certification.

SCOUTING: As noted above, the crew often served as a service unit for Scout camporees, planned and carried out Webelos Days, served as summer staff members for the Council Summer Camp, assisted in many work projects at camp and council office, provided helping hands for

Scout-O-Ramas and participated fully in the Order of the Arrow's Shin Go Beek Lodge.

Most of our members had strong links to troops. Many stayed active in their troop, some took on leadership positions. At least four crew members became Scoutmasters while the Rover Crew was active or shortly thereafter. Three of our number became Career (paid) Scouters—one of whom just received the OA's distinguished service award. Two became district commissioners. One a district chairman. Four were summer camp and program directors. Two served on national camping school and two on national jamboree staffs.

ROVERING: Rovering was a great community where we knew lots of folks all over. We supported Crews who organized moots by attending and participating and we organized three moots near Chicago...the first in Herrick Lake, Illinois, and the latter two at Camp To-Pe-Ne-Be, near

Michigan City, Indiana. Our moots had some great games and chances to see Chicago. We published the Illinois Rover and we often served on the staff of other crew moots. One member attended the Canadian National Rover Conference in 1971 (NAROCO 71) and brought back ideas for our program and news of Canadian thinking.

COMMUNITY. We served as first aiders for various events, set up and take down crews for summer concerts, and were even a registered service club at a local college.

GOD and COUNTRY. Many of our members earned their faith's religious emblems. Two went into the ministry. At least six went into the armed forces for a stretch.

BROTHERHOOD

Rovering is an amazing brotherhood. Members of the DWRC enjoyed hospitality from brother Rovers and their families on many trips. Overnighing with members of the BP Crew on the way to University or with new Rover friends while hiking (with thumb out) across Canada. Special links developed with the guys from Centinel Rover Crew, Port Credit, Ontario, Canada, who often welcomed us to overnight in their cabin. (That cabin still exists but is now owned by the park district in Port Credit, Ont.)

More than that, we have great memories of the crew's mate Barney Smith—with the arrival of



CRESTS FROM THE THREE RENDEZVOUS MOOTS. *First:* The cardinal is the state bird of Illinois, the white oak leaves were symbolic of Oak Park, and of course, Scouting's Fleur di lis. *Second:* The color is actually purple on the border and the center flag, recognizing our world brotherhood. The flags of Canada and the USA indicate the participation of both countries. *Third:* The square knotted loop was retained for the world brotherhood. The sword represented the the Rovering theme of knight-hood and the investiture which took place after the campfire at the moot.

each new carload would call his mom and ask her if she could add enough meatballs for three or four more for dinner. And of course, we almost knew our way around Glasgow, Ky, and Camp Rotary as well as we did the Chicago suburbs.

Stories of the wonderful hospitality in Glasgow KY abound but so do those of Canada...and later in Australia.....that was one great Rover Breakfast.

RENDEZVOUS MOOTS

Our three moots were attended by 100 to 150 Rovers from Kentucky and Canada as well as by a couple of the best Chicagoland Explorer Posts and the Lithuanian Scouts in

Exile. A typical weekend would include a Friday Road Rally or trip to downtown Chicago, Skipper's breakfast on Saturday morning, Land and lake games all day Saturday, Chicago Hot Dogs for lunch, A chicken Barbeque, Campfire (with fireworks), Sunday's Scouter's Own, Closing and Awards, Clean Up, and Dinner in New Buffalo, Michigan with farewells on Monday morning. As I remember, the moots were in May.

The Longest Haul tire went to the guys from Bramalea once, to Quebecers once, and to Sudbury once. What great folks for braving our Border Patrol to visit.



SLOGAN

"Who so smiteth this shield, do so at his peril."

SONG

Gypsy Rover

SYMBOLISM of CREW CREST

Both the thumbstick and the cross of St. George were traditional symbols of Roving. The cross on the white shield was borrowed from the BP Crew Crest from whence our roots came. The thumbstick was a diamond willow which was a very unique tree, when branches fell, the former attachment was the form of a diamond. We also had a flag that looked like the crest –but square.



Moots the Crew or members attended

Gosh this is a hard one. I will be sure to check my campfire blanket. Here is a work in progress, and I know it is not complete—or may be incorrect:

Wee Moots: VIII, IX, XI, XIII, XIV, XVI, XVII

CAMAS Rover Ranger: 72, 73, 74

Roving in the Mud, Thayer Acres

Mud Bowl Moot

White Bear Rover Ranger

Ontario Rover Moot 25, 27, 29

Pine Tree Moot, 10, 11, 12, 13

Ontario Rover Conference

NAROCO 71

Mt. Nemo Muk Luk

Mt. Nemo Snowball Rover Ranger 72, 73

Milton Rover Crew Centennial

6th Sarnia